PRESTONWOOD CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

COURSE GUIDE

LOWER SCHOOL



PCA's Lower School offers a nurturing environment where every child is challenged to meet their full potential as they are introduced to the world of ideas. Classrooms provide an active, vibrant atmosphere where learning is fun and teachers meet each child's individual learning needs. Small groups and differentiated instruction contribute significantly to the quality of our academic program. Faith is intentionally integrated into every academic content area creating a distinct learning environment and community that considers the whole child.

Lower School Classes Offered at Prestonwood Christian Academy Include

Pre-Kindergarten 3	**Pre-Kindergarten 4**	**Pre-Kindergarten 5**
Kindergarten	**First Grade**	**Second Grade**
Third Grade	**Fourth Grade**	**Enrichment**

Prestonwood Christian Academy

Mission

In pursuit of excellence, the mission of Prestonwood Christian Academy is to assist Christian parents by helping equip students to embrace biblical truth, strive for academic excellence and model Christ-like leadership to influence their culture, churches and homes for Christ.

Vision

To advance a Christian school of excellence through Kingdom education so that the generations to come will know the truth of God's Word and not forget His works, nor be taken captive by the vain philosophies of their day.

Core Values

In order to successfully fulfill the mission, Prestonwood Christian Academy will give priority to seven core values. Each core value must have operating principles that will allow PCA to put these core values into everyday practice in every aspect of its educational programs.

Pre-Kindergarten 3 Core Instruction

The Pre-Kindergarten 3 student has several essential milestones of development in their year. Students grow and become more independent as they develop fine and gross motor skills. Whether navigating the stairs and playground or learning to hold a pencil and use scissors, the Pre-Kindergarten 3 student has many opportunities to build these skills. Oral language development and students learning, thinking, and problem-solving are increasing significantly during this time. PCA Pre-Kindergarten 3 students learn the initial skills of writing as they learn spacial awareness, how to draw a person, how to write their name, and the parts of letter formation that build success. Students continue to grow independently as they complete tasks, explore new learning opportunities, connect and play with peers and attend to personal needs such as using the restroom on their own, unpacking their backpacks, and helping clean up after activities. As students progress during this school year, they also learn the basic rules, procedures, and appropriate social interactions with peers and adults. At PCA all the skills listed above are taught alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate developmentally appropriate whole-child learning.

Bible

Pre-Kindergarten 3 students are guided through Bible lessons that explore the wonders of creation to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the Father's glorious love along the way. All activities in the classroom revolve around teaching biblical truths and reinforcing weekly Bible stories and verses through music, dramatic play, and crafts.

ELAR (English, Language Arts, Reading)

Pre-Kindergarten 3 students spend a great deal of time putting their thoughts into words and learning to express themselves to others through independent play, dramatic play, and conflict resolution. *Learning Without Tears* resources support students as they engage in music, movement, and multi-sensory manipulatives that teach core reading readiness skills for Pre-Kindergarten students. Pre-reading skills include listening to stories, retelling stories through dramatic play, class discussions, and drawing pictures. Teachers assist students in developing oral and written language skills by drawing and labeling pictures to reflect their thoughts and help translate their ideas into written language through dictation. Phonetic skills are taught in conjunction with *Learning Without Tears* resources helping to build phonemic awareness.

Math

Preschool math curriculum is integrated into daily learning in developmentally appropriate ways. Foundational math concepts are introduced using visual aids, books, songs, and manipulatives to the Pre-Kindergarten 3 students in dynamic ways. Teachers use a variety of learning opportunities to support learning which include large group time that is then reinforced through small group activities. Children develop an understanding of shapes, colors, and patterns, learn to count and recognize numerals, apply one-to-one correspondence, and group objects according to their attributes. Learning to match, order, and sequence are math skills that are also necessary pre-reading skills.

Science

Pre-Kindergarten 3 students learn by doing. The students use many hands-on activities relating to thematic units, including life cycles, habitats, seasons, and body parts. Teachers continue to provide a print-rich environment as they label simple diagrams of subjects discussed. Experiential opportunities supporting science learning are intentionally embedded through field trips, simple science experiments, and using simple scientific instruments. Additionally, exploration of the outdoors and specimens brought into the room as well as sensory exploration of sand, water, and other tactile play, are part of the Pre-Kindergarten 3 students' science learning opportunities.

Social Studies

The Pre-Kindergarten 3 social studies curriculum focuses on self, home, family, and the classroom. Students begin to develop an understanding of the world around them and how to relate to that world as we celebrate the uniqueness of God's creation. The Pre-Kindergarten 3 student will also learn the purpose of rules and be able to identify authority figures in their home, school, and community. Honoring our country and our God through learning and reciting the pledges and identifying some key American symbols is also part of the learning during this year. Additionally, students will learn about holiday traditions through class activities, discussions, and dramatic play.

Pre-Kindergarten 4 Core Instruction

The Pre-Kindergarten 4 class works to ready students for the rigors of kindergarten both socially and academically. Physically students grow and become more independent as they develop fine and gross motor skills. Oral language and vocabulary development is increasing significantly during this time as well as students learning, thinking, and problem-solving. Students continue to grow more independent as they attend to tasks for more extended periods, follow multi-step directions, explore new learning opportunities, connect and play with peers and attend to personal needs. As students progress during this school year, they learn to be a student by practicing listening without interrupting, contributing to class discussions in meaningful ways, increasing the quality of work, cooperating with peers, learning the understand the basic rules, procedures, and appropriate social interactions with peers and adults. At PCA all the skills listed above are taught alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate developmentally appropriate whole-child learning.

Bible

The Pre-Kindergarten 4 Bible class emphasizes the truth of God's Word. We believe young children can understand that God made them, loves them, and has a plan for their lives. Through Bible lessons, students are presented with God's word as the exciting story of His involvement with mankind. The year starts with creation and moves chronologically through Old Testament themes and then introduces students to the miracles of Jesus. Common themes include: God made you, will never leave you, and cares for you. Students will learn the compassion of our Savior through His miracles and that a miracle is something only God can do. Ultimately, we want all our students to come away with the foundational understanding that Jesus wants to work a miracle in their hearts by forgiving them of their sins. Pre-Kindergarten 4 students are encouraged to retell the truths they learn through artwork, drama, and real-life situations. God's standards of behavior are demonstrated, expected, and reinforced through classroom situations.

ELAR (English, Language Arts, Reading)

The Pre-Kindergarten 4 language arts curriculum is designed to introduce and expand the students' understanding of pre-reading skills in preparation for reading success in kindergarten. Students develop oral language skills through opportunities that expand vocabulary. Learning activities support extending skills as students learn to follow directions, break down words, develop phonological awareness, and engage in the initial decoding steps necessary for reading. Teachers utilize the Learning Without Tears program, which helps students build and print letters while also helping them understand how letters make words and that there is a directionality to how we read and write text. Students are exposed daily to various literary works, including nursery rhymes and author studies. Rich texts help expose students to opportunities to understand the author's purpose and story elements, increase vocabulary, and deepen an appreciation for different genres, rhyming schemes, and the flow of a story sequence.

Mathematics

The mathematics program in the Pre-Kindergarten 4 course challenges children to explore number patterns, measurement, geometry, special relations, and classification. Children develop basic counting techniques and deepen their understanding of number relationships and operations. Daily activities include a variety of whole group, small group, and independent practice, including calendar math, problem solving through the use of manipulatives, sorting and classifying objects into groups and by attributes, graphing, and developing number sense in preparation for kindergarten.

Science

The Pre-Kindergarten 4 students learn by doing. Students participate in many hands-on activities that correlate to thematic units. The units cover topics such as plant benefits and seasonal changes, animals and how they resemble their young, weather, seasons, and shadows. Students also learn about concepts in health by investigating the five senses, nutrition, healthy habits, and safety.

Social Studies

The Pre-Kindergarten 4 social studies curriculum focuses on self, home, family, and the classroom. Students begin to develop an understanding of the world around them and how to relate to that world as we celebrate the uniqueness of God's creation. The Pre-Kindergarten 4 student will also learn the purpose of rules and be able to identify authority figures in their home, school, and community. Honoring our country and our God through learning and reciting the pledges and identifying some key American symbols is also part of the learning during this year. Additionally, students will learn about historical figures, events and symbols, community helpers, rules and authority, and holiday traditions.

Pre-Kindergarten 5 Core Instruction

The Pre-Kindergarten 5 class supports students who would benefit developmentally from a bonus year between Preschool and Kindergarten for academic reasons, social-emotional growth, or a later birthday. Students in this class have access to kindergarten curriculum, differentiated instruction, and room to grow at a developmentally appropriate pace. Pre-Kindergarten 5 students continue practicing academic skills necessary for kindergarten, reading, and building number sense while reinforcing their independence to attend to personal needs, problem-solve, and develop perseverance for more challenging tasks. This extra year of growth allows students to meet many social and emotional milestones, including playing and taking turns with peers, contributing to meaningful class discussions, and developing increased control of emotions to communicate their feelings better. This gift of time, additional practice, and exposure to content help prepare students for the rigors of kindergarten in a fun and age-appropriate way. At PCA all the skills listed above are taught alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate developmentally appropriate whole-child learning.

Bible

The Bible curriculum in Pre-Kindergarten 5 emphasizes the creation of the world by God's perfect design. The students study the loss of the perfect creation through the fall of man into sin and God's plan for reconciliation. The children explore the Old Testament Bible stories and their truths of how God reveals Himself to mankind. Common themes throughout the Old Testament, such as obedience, courage, purity, and the love of God for all of His creation are discussed. Major units in the Pre-Kindergarten 5 New Testament curriculum include the study of Christ's birth, sinless life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension unto the Father's right hand. The class studies the life of Christ as the Healer, Miracle Worker, Provider, and Savior, all of whom children can know personally. Pre-Kindergarten 5 students are encouraged to respond to the Bible lessons through art, drama, oral retelling, and pictorial summaries in journals.

ELAR (English, Language Arts, Reading)

The Pre-Kindergarten 5 language arts curriculum is designed to introduce and expand the students' understanding of pre-reading skills in preparation for reading success in kindergarten. The students expand their oral language through classroom discussions, engagement with meaningful text, and increased access to vocabulary. Engaging in learning activities that are research-based and aligned with the science of reading support students as they learn to break down words, develop phonological awareness, and engage in the initial decoding steps necessary for reading. Teachers expand the use of the Learning Without Tears program and engage students with differentiated learning opportunities through small groups, technology, and learning centers. The students are exposed daily to various literary works, author studies, and nursery rhymes throughout the year that reinforce student vocabulary and concepts of print. Students in the Pre-Kindergarten class gain an increased appreciation of genres, rhyming schemes, and the flow of story sequences.

Mathematics

The mathematics program in Pre-Kindergarten 5 challenges children to explore patterns, number concepts, addition, measurement, shape, space, and classification. Children continue to develop basic counting techniques and deepen their understanding of number relationships and operations. Daily activities include calendar math, problem solving through the use of manipulatives, sorting and classifying objects into groups and by attributes, graphing, and developing estimation skills and number sense in preparation for kindergarten.

Science

The Pre-Kindergarten 5 students learn by observing and participating in hands-on activities that correlate to thematic units. Units taught cover the following topics: states of matter, plant growth, animal habitats, and behavior, weather and seasonal changes, the five senses, healthy habits, dinosaurs, fossils, insects, and products from farms and forests.

Social Studies

The Pre-Kindergarten 4 social studies curriculum focuses on self, home, family, and the classroom. Students begin to develop an understanding of the world around them and how to relate to that world as we celebrate the uniqueness of God's creation. The Pre-Kindergarten 4 student will also learn the purpose of rules and be able to identify authority figures in their home, school, and community. Honoring our country and our God through learning and reciting the pledges and identifying some key American symbols is also part of the learning during this year. Additionally, students will learn about historical figures, events and symbols, community helpers, rules and authority, and holiday traditions.

Kindergarten Core Instruction

Kindergarten is a big year of growth where students are eager to learn and engage with their peers. Language is growing quickly as students string together six to eight word sentences and can contribute to discussions, ask questions and develop meaning about the world around them. In the Kindergarten class, students start taking the NWEA MAP assessments which help inform differentiated learning opportunities in small group times and learning stations utilizing a workshop model approach. Students also engage in meaningful whole-group discussions in all content areas. Academic skills increase in rigor alongside the physical and emotional development of the Kindergarten student. Additionally, students are encouraged to persevere through and develop solutions for challenges they might face. The Kindergarten year is also made up of some of the most beloved traditions at PCA. Whether it is Transportation Day, special field trips, or Kindergarten Circus, learning is integrated in dynamic ways to provide foundational skills in all academic areas. At PCA all the skills and opportunities listed above are taught alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate developmentally appropriate whole-child learning.

Bible

The Bible curriculum in Kindergarten focuses on the names of God. Scripture is used to introduce the names of God, and the origin and meaning of each name is examined. Through this study which includes Elohim,Jehovah Jireh, Emmanuel, Alpha and Omega, Jehovah Rophe, I Am, and Jesus students are helped in understanding God's character. The names introduced include Elohim, Jehovah Jireh, Emmanuel, Alpha and Omega, Jehovah Rophe, I Am, and Jesus. As students connect the Old Testament and New Testament stories that demonstrate each of these names, they engage in activities reinforcing the meaning, supporting scripture memorization, and prayer. Each lesson has been developed to provide a better understanding of the loving character of God.

ELAR (English, Language Arts, Reading)

The Kindergarten language arts curriculum utilizes many rich opportunities to enhance the kindergarten child's written and expressive language development. Phonemic and phonetic awareness skills are taught through lessons aligned with the science of reading. These skills include letter/sound manipulation, syllabication, rhyming, and other decoding skills. Written expression is encouraged through journal writing, independent writing, and other thematic writing assignments. Formal instruction of writing is taught through the writer's workshop model. Correct letter formation is stressed, along with concepts of print (left-to-right and top-to-bottom). Oral communication and listening activities help extend the vocabulary and conceptual knowledge of the kindergartner. The learning environment is "literature rich," using a wide variety of children's literature. Students develop reading fluency using decodable readers. They expand oral vocabulary by describing common objects and events; retelling familiar stories while identifying characters, settings, and important events; and asking and answering questions about informational text.

Math

Students in Kindergarten engage with math in a variety of ways that are supported by standards-aligned and research-based resources. Utilizing a workshop model, interactive learning stations provide hands-on engagement, the foundation of Kindergarten mathematics, providing a balanced curriculum. Daily math discussions through calendar times also support content that builds a deep understanding of essential math skills and concepts. Students develop strong number sense and the foundations for sorting and classifying, fractions and ordinals, addition and subtraction, geometry, measurement, and money identification and value.

Science

In the Kindergarten science course, students become fascinated with the teaching of hands-on, discovery-oriented science using thematic units, literature, and the Mystery Science program as integral parts of their studies. The units cover topics about plants and their life cycle, the animal kingdom, the solar system, weather and seasons, matter (solids, liquids, gasses), energy, magnets, nutrition, health, and insects.

Social Studies

The focus of the social studies program in Kindergarten is to help the students realize the connection between their lives and the world around them. It encompasses lessons in citizenship, rules/laws, culture, government, economy and geography, and historical perspectives. The children study historical people and the contributions they made to society. They look at basic human needs such as food, clothing, and shelter and learn how those needs are met. They become aware of the purpose of rules, the role of authority figures in the home and school and learn the interdependence of all people with one another and their environment. Throughout the year, the curriculum emphasizes a study of celebrations, symbols, and customs that represent American beliefs. Students will engage in meaningful activities that include biographies, artwork, poetry and songs enriching the children's learning experiences.

First Grade Core Instruction

In First Grade students advance many skills during this important year. They learn more complex spelling and phonics patterns as they continue to decode more complex texts. Building a robust vocabulary and oral language comprehension is an important aspect of building reading fluency and comprehension. The First Grade student also begins to expand their understanding of number concepts and apply math skills to solve problems. Utilizing manipulatives, building mental, math skills and facts fluency helps students to become more capable to see relationships and patterns. In First Grade students also expand their understanding of God and His love for them which leads to many asking questions about faith. As they learn the Fruits of the Spirit, they learn the value of relationships, often building strong bonds with their peers. First Graders engage in some PCA traditions such as Goods and Services Day, field trips, performing at World Impact Day and their first public speaking opportunities through Stand Up and Be Heard projects. At PCA all the skills and opportunities listed above are fostered alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate learning through a biblical worldview lens.

Bible

First Graders explore the many gifts of love that God has given to us, focusing on aspects of creation, our families, friends, possessions, Salvation found in Jesus Christ, and God's care. Students learn that Jesus is the perfect example and how the Holy Spirit allows us to live out His character in our lives. Salvation and grace are taught throughout the year and emphasized through each lesson, increasing their knowledge about God and His Word. Additionally, students engage with Scripture as they write it on their hearts through Bible verse memorization and discussions about the character of Jesus in contrast to other people found in the Bible.

ELAR (English, Language Arts, Reading)

First Grade language arts program supports students with reading and spelling instruction aligned with the science of reading. The students become independent readers and spellers equipped with decoding skills, spelling rules and tools to help them decode, read and spell words. Reading practice and comprehension is supported with literature that is rich in vocabulary and story development. Students also engage with providing differentiated reading activities as they navigate a variety of texts and decodable readers during small group instruction time. Basic grammar and punctuation rules are reinforced as students become authors engaging in writing activities through writer's workshop. Students learn to write personal narratives, how to, informational texts and fiction as well as writing for a purpose. At the end of the year, students are able to write a short paragraph using correct punctuation, capitalization and content.

Math

The first grade mathematics program provides students active engagement with standards aligned and research based resources to create a balanced curriculum. Students engage in rigorous content focused on building deep conceptual understanding of key math skills and concepts such as sorting, classifying, fractions, ordinals, addition, subtraction, geometry, decimals for the purposes of money, and measurement. Students use manipulatives, technology, and daily math discussions as they develop number sense, facts fluency and problem solving skills. Teachers differentiate instruction through math stations, challenging math reasoning, and product creation.

Science

First Grade First Grade science includes observation, classification, research, prediction and practical application. Students learn about what scientists do and engage in hands-on exploration and experiments that encourage curiosity. Science concepts are studied throughout the year and provide students an opportunity to investigate the uniqueness of God's creation. In the life science units, students define the basic characteristics of animal classifications and during the ocean unit identify a variety of ocean creatures and their characteristics. In addition, students study the proportions of land and water on the earth and the natural sources of water (streams, lakes, rivers), seasonal patterns, and properties of light and sound.

Social Studies

The social studies course in First Grade encourages Christian character and growth as they engage in lessons that focus on citizenship, rules/laws, culture, government, economy, geography, and historical perspectives. The history units focus on how people from a variety of cultures worked hard to make America what it is today. Students navigate facts and opinions and learn how to explain some crucial aspects of our nation. The First Grade student learns about important historical figures and how our nation's leadership relates to God's purpose for government. Map skills are formally introduced, and the students learn about the seven continents, the major oceans, and how we should use resources wisely. In economics, the students study needs versus wants, goods versus services, and producers versus consumers. Additionally, students in First Grade recognize the value of citizenship and community as they see how family, church, government, citizenship, and the work we get to do is all part of God's great plan.

Second Grade Core Instruction

Second Grade students continue to sharpen skills learned in First Grade as they prepare for the rigors of Third Grade. While they navigate through more complex writing tasks, they develop the ability to create stories with a well defined beginning, middle, and end. With stronger fine motor skills, the Second Grade student will transition from printing to cursive. As their attention span expands, they can attend to tasks for more extended periods of time. Students at this age also make connections, look for reasons behind things they learn, and become more inquisitive. Many students at this age will ask questions about what they are learning in Bible and connecting it to the academic content they are learning. Additionally, students in Second Grade have a greater understanding of cause and effect and can develop plans for the tasks they need to complete. Second Graders engage in some PCA traditions such as Adventures of Flat Stanley service projects, Cowboy Campfire, and the Let George Do It performance. Second Graders also extend learning outside of the classroom through field trips and practice public speaking opportunities through Stand Up and Be Heard projects. At PCA all the skills and opportunities listed above are fostered alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate learning through a biblical worldview lens.

Bible

Second graders are presented with the Bible as the story of God's acts, promises and character. It is our hope that as they come to know God, they will accept His gift of salvation and live lives of joyful service and obedience. Students are introduced to themes and structures found in Scripture. Through the Old Testament, students learn of the Israelites' exile, return, and God's first promises to humanity. In their New Testament study, they study the life of Jesus: His birth, His ministry, the parables He told, and His death and resurrection. The students are also taught the importance of prayer by focusing on the Lord's Prayer. Second graders emphasize the Great Commission and missions as they participate in various service projects. Weekly Bible memorization is an important part of their learning and applying God's Word.

ELAR (English, Language Arts, Reading)

In the Second Grade language arts program, students engage with reading strategies aligned with the science of reading and supported by foundational phonics skills. The daily framework of instruction in phonics, word-attack skills, vocabulary, and comprehension are integral to the Second Grade reading program. Reading comprehension is enhanced with children's literature through trade books and short novels with rich vocabulary and engaging characters. Students' reading is supported throughout the day in small groups, shared reading of mentor texts, and independent practice. Assignments lead students to demonstrate an appreciation for what they read and encourage higher-order thinking. The Second Grade language arts programs reviews and builds on spelling, grammar usage, and composition skills necessary for clear and concise written expression. Students learn the foundations of letter writing, descriptive paragraphs, expository paragraphs, time and order paragraphs, and story narratives. The writing process is emphasized as students practice brainstorming, writing rough drafts, revising, editing, and publishing works throughout the curriculum. Students also begin learning to read and write cursive.

Mathematics

The Mathematics curriculum for Second Grade uses a variety of manipulatives and materials in conjunction with standards-aligned and research-based resources. Second grade students continue their study with traditional mathematical units, including number concepts, operations, measurement, geometry, and fractions. Students during this year dive deeper into these concepts and expand their understanding. Gaining mathematical fluency is a focus throughout the year in mastering the addition and subtraction facts, addition and subtraction with regrouping, and strategies for solving word problems. The students continue to develop foundational number concepts, including writing numbers to one thousand, odd and even numbers, ordinal numbers, greater than or less than, and place value to compare and order numbers through 1,200. Multiplication and division concepts are introduced, and students learn skills in measurement, including how to find the perimeter and area of shapes. Geometry is introduced by identifying the characteristics of geometric solids, congruent shapes, symmetry, and translations of shapes. Many other skills are reinforced throughout the year, such as telling time, counting money, reading graphs and thermometers, creating patterns, and understanding fractions. The Second Grade math program also includes activities promoting higher-level thinking, logic, and creative problem-solving skills.

Science

The Second Grade Science curriculum is taught from a Biblical worldview through a hands-on approach. In Life Science, the students study animal biodiversity, dinosaurs, and fossils. Both of these studies help the students begin to understand the complexity and miraculous works of our Creator. The students also study materials, properties of materials, and states of matter through hands-on experiments and STEM lessons. In Earth Science, the students investigate the effects of rocks, sand, and erosion on our earth and study the amazing solar system. During the solar system unit, students choose a specific area of interest to research and present. The students get to choose their mode of presentation based on their unique learning styles.

Social Studies

The Second Grade Social Studies units focus on geography, history, government, citizenship economics, and American culture with a Christian perspective. Students delve into our nation's history as students explore the tribes of people indigenous to North America, American core values, and the influences of immigrants as we share cultures. They study the economic concepts of trading, taxation, wants and needs, and understand the financial constraints and options colonists faced in their daily lives. Lessons that teach the purpose of government and the foundations of our nation's laws help our students understand the process of and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. An emphasis is placed on understanding the rights associated with democracy and the United States' form of government. Students learn the basic symbols and songs related to the state of Texas. In addition, they learn about national monuments, their significance and location, and the importance of patriotic songs.

Third Grade Core Instruction

As the Third Grade student progresses, they begin to put all their skills together to extend their learning. Moving from learning to read to reading to learn, the Third Grade student will play with words as they understand the nuances of language. By the end of Third Grade, students will often find activities and learning they enjoy. Whether engaging in a sport, learning a talent, or engaging in a particular subject, this is a great year to try new things. Encouraging students to try various activities that PCA offers is a great way to expand these interests. Speech meet, spelling bee, and Math Olympics are great opportunities to enhance the school experience. Third Graders have many opportunities to collaborate with peers as they navigate learning. As part of their Stand Up and Be Heard project, students memorize and recite the Romans Road, often leading to a better understanding of God's grace and mercy. Additionally, Third Graders participate in some beloved PCA traditions such as Pioneer Day, Tool Time, Invention Convention, Charlotte's Web Day and Owl Pellet Day. Each of these events celebrate learning that occurs during this year. At PCA all the skills and opportunities listed above are fostered alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate learning through a biblical worldview lens.

Bible

The Third Grade Bible course concentrates on helping students find the answers they need for life in God's Word. The primary goal throughout the Bible curriculum is to make the Word of God more meaningful to students' lives. The students find knowledge, wisdom, and understanding for themselves as they study the lives of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Ruth and Daniel. In addition to the in-depth Bible study completed each week, a strong emphasis is placed on character development with practical lessons enabling students to make life-changing decisions even at a young age. Through weekly memory verses, students learn to hide God's Word in their hearts and apply biblical principles to their daily lives.

ELAR (English, Language Arts and Reading)

In Third Grade, the language arts program teaches students to read, analyze and enjoy different genres and use various reading strategies to increase comprehension through a variety of rich mentor texts. In addition, students also read and expand comprehension and vocabulary through several novel studies. Students learn to apply spelling and grammar knowledge in their writing which is practiced daily, to compose various written projects, including narratives, informative and persuasive papers.

Math

The Third Grade mathematics course uses a variety of resources to support the building blocks of skills previously taught, such as time, operations, measurement, and counting money. New skills focus on problem-solving using real-world situations, calculating larger numbers, schedules, making change, and rounding. A significant emphasis is put on multiplication fluency and the connections between multiplication and division. Students classify planes, solid figures, and congruence in the geometry unit. Fractions are discussed as part of a whole and part of a group, and decimals are put into practice. Hands-on experiences provided in a workshop model format and technology integration support differentiated instruction while expanding academic vocabulary and skills needed for the next steps in mathematics instruction. In preparation for the rigors of Fourth Grade students will end the year with a unit that covers divisibility rules, expressions and variables, order of operations, factors and missing operations as an introduction to algebra.

Science

In Third Grade science, students gain knowledge and appreciation of God as the divine Creator and explore the world He created. Environments are studied in life science to help the students understand the unique organization of God's creation. Birds and amphibians are the two main vertebrates studied from the animal kingdom. In earth science, the students study weather and climate with an emphasis on the atmosphere and natural weather disasters. In physical science, the focus is on simple machines. In the area of health, the students analyze how germs are part of the process of illness and disease. Students get to investigate owl pellets, engage in STEM activities, and become inventors utilizing what they discover in the simple machines unit. The scientific method is incorporated into all areas of the science curriculum.

Social Studies

In the social studies curriculum, the third graders begin their year by studying map skills, including the study of continents, oceans, longitude, latitude, cardinal and intermediate directions, hemispheres, and landforms. Students learn about specific types of maps and how to identify symbols on different maps. The roles and duties of local elected officials in government are taught through classroom cities. Students learn about the growth of our nation from 17 to 44 states as they study Westward Expansion. The second semester begins with the study of immigration. Students examine the lives of men and women who overcame obstacles and sacrificed to immigrate to the United States. Opportunities are presented for students to further strengthen their understanding of liberty, freedom, and patriotism. The last history unit exposes them to the Industrial Revolution and the inventors who have impacted the world by advancing machinery and communication. Throughout the year, students identify important contributions that individuals have made in the development and growth of the United States.

Fourth Grade Core Instruction

The Fourth Grade year is marked by growth spurts and learning as students by grow leaps and bounds. Socially they understand that there is more than one point of view and start to realize the interconnectedness of events. The increased understanding of language helps them self-edit their oral and written language, and their discussions will consist of more complex sentence structures. They will engage actively in discussions and use reference materials to support their writing and opinions. Students get to participate in Honor Choir and can often try out for the school musical. They are the leaders of the Lower School and have some special opportunities such as monthly breakout sessions with campus ministries as part of our chapel program. As the final grade in Lower School, Fourth Graders participate in departmentalized courses and expand their understanding of technology to submit and access their assignments in preparation for Middle School. Additionally, they begin learning about how to research and , present on a topic. They engage in more cross curricular learning opportunities helping tie learning together in meaningful ways. PCA traditions for the Fourth Graders include leading special school events such as See You at the Pole or daily announcements. As leaders they are taught the importance of service and provided opportunities to serve the school and community. At PCA all the skills and opportunities listed above are fostered alongside the following academic subjects as we navigate learning through a biblical worldview lens.

Bible

The Fourth Grade Bible course studies the life of Christ and the Old and New Testament. The second semester emphasizes positive character qualities through a study of the Holy Spirit and various Bible characters. Students study the Fruits of the Spirit, humility, obedience, forgiveness, compassion, courage, and wise choices based on biblical principles. The last unit is a study of Paul and his ministry.

ELAR (English, Language Arts and Reading)

The Fourth Grade ELAR instruction is an interactive and integrated approach to spelling, grammar, writing, and reading. Oral and written expressions are explored in various circumstances, utilizing many techniques, including games and multi-sensory activities. The instructional intent is to engage students in activities that will prepare them for reading, thinking, and problem-solving in real-world situations. The students also engage in two novel studies in a book club format allowing students to collaborate, expand vocabulary and develop annotation skills. In addition to reading instruction, students participate in discussions on the literature and the biblical/worldview concepts portrayed or emphasized. Writing instruction incorporates the editing process as the students learn to write expository research, narrative, descriptive, procedural, compare/contrast, and persuasive papers.

Mathematics

The Fourth Grade mathematics curriculum solidifies fundamental concepts of numbers and encourages students to expand their understanding by introducing new concepts in fractions, decimals, basic geometry, and algebraic concepts. Expands on the concepts of multiplication, division, problem-solving, measurement, data collection, graphing, and modeling mathematical principles using manipulatives, direct instruction, and technology. Emphasis is placed on identifying logical relationships and applying learned concepts to answer problems in principle and real-world situations. The Fourth Grade mathematics curriculum is based on the biblical principle that human investigation into mathematics should reveal God's rational and designed order.

Science

The Fourth Grade curriculum develops higher-level thinking skills and independent thinking through exploring, discovering, and investigating some of the fundamental truths of science. In life science, the focus is on plants and animals. The students study photosynthesis, respiration, and seed dispersal in the plant study. The animal study focuses on invertebrates, insects, and simple classification. In earth science, the students study geology and astronomy. The geology unit includes the study of rocks and minerals as well as the effects of volcanoes, earthquakes, and glaciers on the earth's surface. In physical science, the students discover magnetism and electricity. They compare forces of magnetic attraction by using hands-on experiences in a magnetic lab. The students can show examples of and evaluate electric currents. The biblical account of creation is the primary focus in all science studies.

Social Studies

In the Fourth Grade history curriculum, the specific historical and geographical emphasis is the study of Texas. In addition to field trips that enhance learning, students participate in individual research, supplementary reading assignments and creative and expository writing assignments. Also, each student gathers information from a variety of printed and online resources to develop a biographical report project on a person significant to Texas history or a Christian who is an example of the great commision.

LOWER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Art

The Pre-Kindergarten art course begins with a firm foundation in the basic elements of design: line, shape, texture, and color, which are built upon each subsequent year. The art projects combine basic art concepts and vocabulary with interesting and fun creations. The students experiment with many different media, including painting, drawing, printmaking, collage, and sculpture. The art program in Kindergarten expands students exploration of artistic opportunities. While working on the projects, the students establish a confidence in their own abilities and are exposed to various aspects of art history. By First Grade students are encouraged to express their own ideas through original artworks and several unique varieties of media such as mosaic, watercolor and mixed media. They are becoming more familiar with art techniques and terminology. Second graders are expanding their knowledge preparing them for a more advanced study of art. Third and Fourth Grade students are expanding their use of different mediums while also exploring 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional art design and the beginnings of color theory as they learn the color wheel. In both the Third and Fourth Grade art classes cultures, biblical integration and historical influences of art are explored.

Music

In the Pre-Kindergarten music class, students explore sound using their voices to speak, whisper, shout, and chant. Students better understand their singing, or “head” voice, as they learn simple songs of limited vocal range based on classroom units of study. Sol, “Mi and La” are informally introduced since they are the most commonly used pitches in the young child’s voice. Ear training is essential at every level of music study though it is presented informally and playfully at this age. Students play pitched and unpitched instruments, listen, move, dramatize, and use technology as they are introduced to the elements of music, including time (beat/rhythm), pitch (high/low), dynamics (soft/loud), and form (same and different). As students progress through Lower School, music students expand their understanding of the elements of music through experiences singing, listening, playing instruments, folk dances, and technology. Student experiences focus on the time element of music by listening to a variety of music, walking the beat and rhythm, clapping, playing on instruments, speaking and singing, and reading standard and non-standard rhythm notation. Pitch is experienced by ear training, listening, singing, using hand signs for the Pentatonic scale, playing pitched instruments, and beginning to read non-standard and standard notation. Students learn to prepare songs and spoken parts for performance and evaluate their performance. Each grade level has milestones in music, including performances and a Third Grade field trip to the Dallas Symphony Orchestra after a study of orchestral instruments.

Physical Education

Physical education in Pre-Kindergarten classes introduces students to various activities to improve gross motor skills, balance, coordination, spatial awareness, good sportsmanship.. As students progress through Lower School Physical Education, they are guided to be physically active for a lifetime. It is our goal to enable students through physical education to perform basic skills in individual and team sports, motor skills, rhythms and fitness activities. Opportunity is provided to accomplish this goal through activities appropriately designed for the student’s developmental level. Believing that God wants us to respect authority and maintain self-control in all areas of our life, physical education provides the perfect setting for learning self-discipline through competition while learning to respect the rules of the game, the officials, and teammates.

Spanish

In the Pre-Kindergarten Spanish class, students are exposed to the Spanish language and cultures worldwide that speak Spanish. They hear and repeat simple phrases and vocabulary for weather, seasons, calendar items, colors, numbers, family members, parts of the body, clothing, food, shapes, and likes and dislikes. Comprehension and retention are encouraged through vocabulary repetition in songs, stories, games, activity sheets, and simple verbal interactions. The children demonstrate understanding nonverbally; therefore, little spontaneous speech is expected. As students progress in Lower School, they broaden their listening, speaking and reading skills. Expanding on the vocabulary and sentence structure introduced in previous grades, each grade level continues the process, exposure and practice and the use of different grammatical arrangements in such a way that engages the kinesthetic, visual and auditory learners. Through practice, songs, in class activities and repetition students gain the necessary confidence for communication and correct verb usage in first, second, and third person singular present tense. Students quickly become equipped for interaction in real-life situations. An emphasis is placed on God's love for people of all languages.

In addition to communication skills, First through Fourth Grade students at PCA develop an awareness of the culture and geography of some Spanish speaking countries. They also learn about special holiday celebrations and cultural practices in these countries. Students begin to understand the meaning of the Great Commission as they learn about missionaries in other countries and memorize scripture. By the end of the fourth grade year, students should have learned three Spanish scriptures by memory: John 14:6, John 3:16, and Matthew 28:19-20. PCA students are being equipped to share Christ across cultural and language barriers in Spanish speaking countries.

Technology

Prestonwood Christian Academy integrates technology into all academic areas in grades Pre-K through Fourth Grade. Throughout the year, students will be exposed to age-appropriate technology utilizing applications and skills that help to reinforce learning. Different technology skills and applications will provide an environment that allows for feedback and the reinforcement of concepts. In addition, students will engage in multidisciplinary projects to create, develop, and present to authentic audiences. Students will be empowered to use technology as a creation tool, moving understanding of technology use from consumer to producer. Digital citizenship will be addressed through ongoing discussions and intentional lessons designed to develop net safe students who have a Christ-centered view of technology use. This integrated approach will allow students to engage in projects that build persistence as students develop skills utilizing computational thinking and collaboration across the curriculum. Technology standards are aligned vertically to build on prior knowledge and prepare all students for an immersive technology approach in Middle School.